

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed on December 20, 2004, the Examiner: rejected claims 11-16, 18-29, 31, 33, 42 and 43 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,701,358 to Poisson et al. ("Poisson"); rejected claims 1, 5, 8, 9, 17, 30 and 34-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Poisson; rejected claims 2, 10 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Poisson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,528,602 to West et al. ("West"); and rejected claims 3, 4, 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Poisson in view of West and "Applied Cryptography" by Bruce Schneier ("Schneier"). Applicants herein cancel claims 14, 26, 27, 32 and 33, and amend claims 11, 25 and 28. As a result, claims 1-13, 15-25, 28-31 and 34-43 are now pending. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection. Further examination and review in view of the amendments and remarks below are respectfully requested.

Applicants' techniques are directed to techniques for centrally managing properties of a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Some of the techniques are directed to enabling a user to issue a single instruction to establish a VPN between two or more private networks utilizing a security device in each of the private networks. For example, the user is able to establish a VPN by merely selecting the security devices it will connect and, optionally, a level of security to use. Some of the techniques are directed to updating the properties of managed property clients, which may be general-purpose computer systems or special-purpose devices, such as security devices. For example, a property client periodically requests property updates from a server, enclosing an indication of the generation date of its current overall property set. In response, the server may instruct the client to transmit its current overall property set and, when the server receives the client's current overall property set, the server makes a copy and substitutes for any updated property. If the resultant new overall property set differs from the current overall property set, the server sends the overall property set to the client for use by the client.

All of the pending claims 1-13, 15-25, 28-31 and 34-43 stand rejected over Poisson, either alone or in combination with one or more of West and Schneier. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

Claims 1-10 each recite the common feature of merging the new properties into a copy of the existing properties received from a subject computer system. In rejecting the claims, the Examiner fails to address this feature in rejecting independent claim 1, and merely states that "'358 as modified above teaches a remote VPN configuration system allowing for the combined steps of copying/merging the complete set of properties from a switch" without providing a reference in rejecting independent claim 8.

Applicants submit that Poisson does not disclose, suggest or teach merging the new properties into a copy of the existing properties received from a subject computer system, as recited. Instead, Poisson merely describes a method for managing a VPN by transmitting configuration information for at least one VPN function to multiple computers that provide the at least one VPN function. In particular, Poisson describes an extranet switch manager that can be used to bulk configure multiple extranet switches. (col. 2, lines 58-61). While Poisson describes configuring extranet switches, Poisson neither discloses, suggest nor teaches merging the new properties for a subject computer system (e.g., extranet switch) with a copy of the existing properties of the subject computer system that are received from the subject computer system. Moreover, Applicants can find in Poisson no such disclosure or suggestion.

Claims 11-13 and 15-25, as amended, each recite the common feature of transmitting the generated properties to the security devices in response to inquiries from the security devices at times subsequent to generating the properties. In rejecting the claims, the Examiner indicates that Poisson's switches scheduling periodic execution of a script and/or periodic transmission of the switch information corresponds to Applicants' transmission of the generated properties to the security devices in response to inquiries from the security devices at times subsequent to generating the properties.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Poisson does not disclose, suggest or teach transmitting the generated properties to the security devices in response to inquiries from the security devices at times subsequent to generating the properties, as recited. According to Poisson, the extranet switches can transmit configuration, capacity, and activity information for inclusion in a report that is produced by the switch manager.

(col. 6, lines 40-46). In Poisson, the periodic, scheduled transmission is of extranet switch information for inclusion in a report, and is not an inquiry from the extranet switch to receive property information for use by the extranet switch to participate in the VPN. Applicants can find in Poisson no such disclosure or suggestion.

Claims 28-31, as amended, each recite the common feature of determining whether the new managed properties differ from the properties in use by the managed computer system. In rejecting the claims, the Examiner fails to address this feature, and merely states that "'358 as modified above teaches a remote VPN configuration system allowing for the combined steps of copying/merging the complete set of properties from a switch" without providing a reference in rejecting now canceled claim 32.

Applicants submit that Poisson does not disclose, suggest or teach determining whether the new managed properties differ from the properties in use by the managed computer system. Again, while Poisson describes configuring extranet switches, Poisson neither discloses, suggest nor teaches determining whether the new managed properties differ from the properties in use by the managed computer system (e.g., extranet switch). Moreover, Applicants can find in Poisson no such disclosure or suggestion.

Claims 34-43 each recite the common feature of using both properties maintained by the distinguished computing system and properties received from a separate computing system in the operation of the distinguished computing system. In rejecting the claims, the Examiner appears to indicate that Poisson's switch manager instructions that enable the configuration of multiple switches to share a set of common characteristics by transmitting the same configuration information to each switch (col. 3, lines 38-44), corresponds to Applicants' distinguished computing system that uses both the properties it maintains and the properties received from a separate computing system in order to operate.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Poisson does not disclose, suggest or teach using both properties maintained by a distinguished computing system and properties received from a separate computing system in the operation of the distinguished

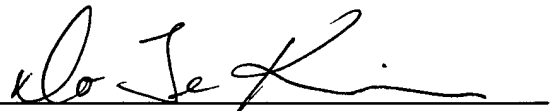
computing system. According to Poisson, the switches handle VPN network functions (col. 3, lines 16-17) and the switch manager instructions transmit the same configuration information to each switch to configure the VPN to permit secure communication. (col. 3, lines 38-47). Thus, in Poisson, the extranet switch is configured using the configuration information received from the switch manager instructions. This is in contrast to Applicants' distinguished computing system that uses both the properties it maintains and the properties received from a separate computing system in order to operate. Applicants can find in Poisson no such disclosure or suggestion.

VI. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-13, 15-25, 28-31 and 34-43 are allowable, and ask that this application be passed to allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8000.

Respectfully submitted,

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